Bobby Jindal
GOVERNOR

Bruce D. Greenstein
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals
Center for Environmental Health Services

****INFORMATION SHEET ****
WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PRIVATE WELL WAS FLOODED

Flooding conditions may have developed as a result of rising waters in the Mississippi river. This flooding may have made your water unsafe. If you are unsure about the impact of flooding on your well water, either use bottled water, or boil or disinfect all the water you use for drinking, making beverages, cooking, brushing your teeth, washing dishes, and washing areas of the skin that have been cut or injured. People who obtain their water from their own individual well or their neighbor's well should disinfect the well and distribution system if flood waters reached and entered the well casing.

Department of Health and Hospitals, recommends that homeowners disinfect their water by one of the following methods prior to consumption (including, cooking, brushing teeth or preparing food):

- Boiling water kills harmful bacteria and parasites. Bringing water to a rolling boil for 1 minute will kill infectious organisms (germs). (The flat taste can be eliminated by shaking the water in a bottle or pouring it from one container to another.)

- If water is clear, water may be treated with chlorine by mixing eight drops (1/8 teaspoon; about the size of a dime) of unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach (4-6 percent active ingredients) per gallon of water. If the water is cloudy or colored, use ¼ teaspoon per gallon of water. Mix the solution thoroughly, and let stand for about 30 minutes. If treated water has too strong a chlorine taste, it can be made more palatable by allowing the water to stand exposed to the air for a few hours or by pouring it from one clean container to another several times.

- If water is clear mix five drops of 2% United States Pharmacopeia (USP) tincture of iodine solution (common household tincture of iodine from the medicine cabinet or first aid package) to each quart of clear water and let it stand for at least 30 minutes prior to consumption. If the water is cloudy or colored, use 10 drops to each quart of water.

Dr. Guidry noted that boiling is the most effective method of disinfection of water particularly for people who are severely immunocompromised and for infants and elderly who wish to take extra precautions.

Before Disinfection: Check the condition of your well. Make sure there is no exposed or damage wiring. If you notice any damage, call a professional before the disinfection process.

It is important to disinfect both well and plumbing water with unscented household bleach to ensure that all infectious agents are destroyed. If you have water treatment devices, remove all membranes, cartridges, and filters and replace them after the chlorination process is completed. DHH recommends the following steps to disinfect a contaminated well:

- **If the water is discolored** before adding the bleach, run the water until it is clear for up to 10 minutes.
- **Turn off and then drain** your hot water heater— bleach is not effective in water above 105 degrees.
- **Remove and replace** any charcoal filters you may have after the disinfecting process is completed.
- **To avoid adding contamination** to the well during disinfection, clean the work area around the top of the well. Then remove grease and mineral deposits from accessible parts of the well head and flush the outside surfaces with 1/2 cup of unscented household bleach in 5 gallons of water.
- **Turn off the pump.** Remove the cap or the well plug on the rubber seal. There are many types of well caps and plugs. If you have questions, you should contact a licensed well driller. If you have a submersible pump, you may also want to contact a licensed well driller for advice on disinfection procedures.
- **Consult the bleach chart** and pour the recommended amount of bleach solution into the well. Try to coat the sides of the casing as you pour.

Well Depth in Feet	**Well Diameter in Inches**			
	2”	4”	5”	6”
20’	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
30’	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	2 cups
40’	1 cup	1 cup	2 cups	2 cups
50’	1 cup	2 cups	1 cups	3 cups
80’	1 cup	2 cups	1 qt	1 qt
100’	1 cup	3 cups	1 qt	1.5 qts
150’	2 cups	1 qt	2 qts	2.5 qts
200’	3 cups	1.5 qts	2.5 qts	3 qts
Conversions: 8 oz = 1 cup 16 oz = 1 pint = 2 cups 24 oz = 3 cups 32 oz = 1 quart 48 oz = 1.5 quarts 64 oz = 2 quarts 80 oz = 2.5 quarts 96 oz = 3 quarts				

- **Re-cap or plug the well** opening and wait 30 minutes.
- **Turn on and, if needed, re-prime the pump** (when re-priming the pump make sure you use potable water)**.** Open all of the faucets on the system one at a time. Allow the water to run until there is a noticeable smell of bleach. You may also want to flush the toilets. If you have outside faucets, you may want to direct the water away from sensitive plants. If you cannot detect a bleach odor, repeat the disinfecting process.
- **Turn off all of the faucets** and allow the bleach to remain in the system for at least eight hours.
- **Backwash water softeners**, sand filters, and iron removal filters with bleach water.
- **Again, open all the faucets** and run the water until there is no bleach smell—for up to 15 minutes.

Should you have further concerns, continue to follow the disinfection methods or use water from a known safe source. Laboratory analyses can confirm the effectiveness of the disinfection. Contact your local parish health unit for information regarding labs approved for analysis of potable water. A complete listing of contact numbers for health units throughout the state can be obtained on the OPH website at: http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=223